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THE
Modern Reasoners:

AN
EPISTLE
TO A
FRIEND.

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EPITOME



BY R. E. D.

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L O N D O N:

Printed for LAWTON GILLIVER, at *Homer's Head*, against *St. Dunstan's Church* in *Fleetstreet*. M.DCC.XXXIV.

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HENCE comes it, *** that each
pretending Fool,
In Reason's spite, in spite of Ri-
dicule,

Fondly his own wild Whims for Truth main-
tains;

And all the blind deluded World disdains;

Himself the only Person blest with Sight,

And his Opinion the great Rule of Right.

'Tis strange, from Folly this Conceit should
rise;

That want of Sense should make us think we're
wise;

Yet

Yet so it is. The most egregious Elf
 Thinks none so wise or witty as himself.
 Who nothing knows, will all Things comprehend,
 And who can least confute, will most contend.

I love the Man, I love him from my Soul,
 Whom neither Weakness blinds, nor Whims
 controul ;
 With Learning blest, with solid Reason fraught,
 Who slowly thinks, and ponders every Thought:
 Yet conscious to himself how apt to err,
 Suggests his Notions with a modest Fear ;
 Hears every Reason, every Passion hides,
 Debates with Calmness, and with Care decides ;
 More pleas'd to learn than eager to confute,
 Not Victory, but Truth, his sole pursuit.

But these are very rare. How happy he
 Who boasts of such a Friend, O****, in Thee !
 Each social Hour is spent in Joys sublime,
 Whilst hand in hand o'er Learning's Alps you
 climb

Thro' Reason's Paths in search of Truth proceed ;
 And clear the flow'ry Way from every Weed ;
 Till

Till from her antient Cavern rais'd to Light,
The beauteous Stranger stands reveal'd to Sight.

How far from this the furious noisy Crew,
Who, what they once assert with Zeal pursue?
Their greater Right infer from louder Tongues,
And Strength of Argument from Strength of
Lungs.

Instead of Sense, who stun your Ears with Sound,
And think they conquer, when they but confound.

Taurus, a bellowing Champion storms and swears,
And drives his Argument thro' both your Ears;
And whether Truth or Falshood, right or wrong,
'Tis still maintain'd and prov'd by dint of —

Tongue.

In all Disputes he bravely wins the Day,
No wonder — for he hears not what you say.

But tho' to tire the Ear's sufficient Curse,
To tire one's Patience is a Plague still worse.

Prato, a formal Sage, debates with Care,
A strong Opponent, take him up who dare.

His Words are grave, deliberate, and cool,
He looks so wise, — 'tis pity he's a Fool.

If he asserts, tho' what no Man can doubt,
He'll bring ten thousand Proofs to make it out.

This,

This, this, and this—is so, and so, and so ;
And therefore, therefore — That, and that you
know.

Circles no Angles have ; a Square has four :
A Square's no Circle therefore — to be sure ;
The Sum of *Prato's* wond'rous Wisdom is,
This is not That, and therefore That not This,
Which uncontested Axiom to defend,
He'll but, and for, and therefore, without End.

Oppos'd to him, but much the greater Nump,
Is he who doubts of all things by the Lump.
The first, for every Trifle will contend ;
But this has no Opinions to defend.
In Fire no Heat, no Sweetness in the Rose ;
The Man's impos'd on by his very Nose ;
Nor Light nor Colour charms his doubting Eye,
The World's a Dream, and all his Senses lie,
He thinks, yet doubts if he's possess'd of Thought ;
Nay even doubts his very Power to doubt.
Ask him if he's a Man, or Beast, or Bird,
He cannot tell upon his honest Word.
'Tis strange so plain a Point's so hard to prove ;
I'll tell you what you are — a Fool by *Jove*.

Another

Another Class of Disputants there are,
 More num'rous than the Doubting Tribe by
 far.
 These are your Wanderers, who from the Point
 Run wild in loose Harangues, all out of joint,
Vagaries, and confute him if you can,
 Will hold debate with any mortal Man.
 He roves from *Genesis* to *Revelations*,
 And quite confounds you with divine Quotations;
 Should you affirm that *Adam* knew his Wife,
 And by that Knowledge lost the *Tree of Life*;
 He contradicts you, and in half an hour
 Most plainly proves—*Pope Joan* the *Scarlet Whore*,
 Nor Head nor Tail his Argument affords,
 A jumbling, incoherent Mass of Words;
 Most of them true, but so together tost
 Without Connection, that their Sense is lost.

But leaving these to rove, and those to doubt,
 Another Clan alarms us; face about:
 See, arm'd with grave Authority they come,
 And with great Names and Numbers strike us
 dumb.
 With these an Error ven'erable appears
 For having been believ'd three thousand Years.

Reason, nay common Sense, to Names must
 And Strength of Argument's no Strength at all.
 But on, my Muse, tho' Multitudes oppose us,
 Alas, Truth is not prov'd by counting Noses:
 Nor fear, tho' ancient Sages are subjoin'd;
 A Lye's a Lye, tho' told by all Mankind.
 'Tis true, I love the Antients — but what then?
 Plato, nor Aristotle, were but Men.
 Egrant dem wise — but the wisest disagree,
 And therefore not sufficient Guides for me.
 An Error, tho' by half the World espous'd,
 Is still an Error, and may be oppos'd.
 And Truth, tho' much from mortal Eyes con-
 ceal'd,
 Is still the Truth, and may be more reveal'd:
 How foolish then will look your mighty Wise,
 Should half their *life darts*, prove plain Lyes.

But on, my Muse, another Tribe remains
 Uncensur'd yet: Let them not 'scape thy hands;
 These are the Passionate; who in Dispute,
 Demand Submission, Monarchs absolute.
 Sole Judges, in their own Conceit, of Wit;
 They damp all those for Fools that won't sub-
 mit.

Sir

Sir *Testy* (thwart Sir *Testy* if you dare) at T
 Swears there's Inhabitants in every Man. vol I
 If you presume to say this mayn't be true, I
 You lie Sir, you're a Fool, and Blockhead
 too.

What he asserts, if any disbelieve,
 How Folks can be so dull he can't conceive.
 He knows he's right, he knows his Judgment
 clear,

But Men are so perverse they will not hear,
Swift, *Bramston*, *Gay*, are stupid Rogues enough,
 And *Pope*, thy Satires are but empty Stuff.

This to deny if any dare presume,
 Fool, Coxcomb, Sot, and Puppy fill the Room;
Hillario, who full well this Humour knows,
 Resolv'd one Day his Folly to expose,
 Kindly invites him with some Friends to dine,
 And entertains 'em with a roast *Sir-loin*.
 Of this he knew Sir *Testy* could not eat,
 And purposely prepar'd it for his treat.
 The rest begin — Sir *Testy*, pray fall to —
 You love roast Beef Sir, come — I know you
 do.

“ Excuse me Sir, 'tis what I never eat.
 How Sir! not love roast Beef! the King of
 Meat!

“ Tis

" 'Tis true indeed." Indeed it is not true,
I love it Sir, and you must love it too.

" I can't upon my Word." Then you're a Fool,
'And don't know what's good Eating by my
Soul.

Not love roast Beef! come, come Sirs, fill his
Plate,
I'll make him love it. — Sir, G—D—ye
eat.

Sir *Tessy* finding what it was they meant,
Rose in a Passion, and away he went.



